

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for enabling perception of multiple online personas including at least a first persona and a second persona of a user in an instant messaging communications session of an instant messaging communications service that enables communications from the user to other identities of users of the instant messaging service, the method comprising:

identifying at least two identities within a communications environment to whom messages may be directed; [[and]]

enabling [[a]] the first persona of [[a]] the user to be projected to a first of the identities; while

concurrently enabling [[a]] the second persona of the same user to be projected to a second of the identities, wherein the first persona is at least partially distinguishable from the second persona within the instant messaging communications service;

projecting the first persona of the user to the first of the identities; and

concurrently projecting the second persona of the user to the second of the identities, wherein the first persona and the second persona are projected using the instant messaging communications service.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating the first persona with a first group of identities so that the first persona is projected to members of the first group of identities in a communications session, wherein the first of the identities is included within the first group of identities.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising associating the second persona with a second group of identities so that the second persona is projected to members of the second group of identities in a communications session, wherein the second of the identities is included within the second group of identities.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating a persona with the first of the identities and associating a different persona with a group of the identities with which the first of the identities is associated, wherein the first persona projected to the first of the identities comprises an amalgamation of the persona associated with the first of the identities and the different persona associated with the group of the identities.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the persona associated with the first of the identities overrides the different persona associated with the group of the identities to the extent a conflict exists.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating a global persona with each of the identities and associating a different persona with a group of the identities with which the first of the identities is associated, wherein the first persona projected to the first of the

identities comprises an amalgamation of the global persona associated with each of the identities and the different persona associated with the group of the identities.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the global persona associated with each of the identities is overridden by the different persona associated with the group of the identities to the extent a conflict exists.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating a global persona with each of the identities and associating a different persona with the first of the identities, wherein the first persona projected to the first of the identities comprises an amalgamation of the global persona associated with each of the identities and the different persona associated with the first of the identities.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the global persona associated with each of the identities is overridden by the different persona associated with the first of the identities to the extent a conflict exists.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising associating an individual persona with the first of the identities, associating a group persona with a group of the identities with which the first of the identities is associated, and associating a global persona with each of the identities, wherein the first persona projected to the first of the identities comprises an amalgamation of the individual persona associated with the first of the identities, the group

persona associated with the group of the identities, and the global persona associated with each of the identities.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the individual persona associated with the first of the identities overrides the group persona associated with the group of the identities and the group persona associated with the group of the identities overrides the global persona associated with each of the identities, to the extent a conflict exists.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the communications session comprises an instant messaging communications session.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the identities are members of a buddy list, the buddy list including the online presence state of the identities.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[14]] 1 further comprising selecting among the first and second personas for projection to a particular one of the identities based on an attribute of the particular identity.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving from the user a selection of at least the first and second personas.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the first persona based upon an attribute of the first identity.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising configuring the persona assigned to the first identity to change based upon the occurrence of a predetermined event.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event is based upon a time of day.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event is based upon a day of the week.

21. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event is based the passage of a pre-determined interval of time.

22. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event comprises a weather condition at a predetermined geographic location.

23. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the pre-determined event comprises communication of a predetermined word.

24. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined emoticon.

25. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined date.

26. (Original) The method of claim 18 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined number of instant messages from the first identity.

27. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the persona assigned to the first identity is configured to change at random among more than one selected personas.

28. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the user comprises a potential instant messaging sender, the first identity comprises a first potential instant messaging recipient, and the first persona is rendered to the first potential instant messaging recipient before communications are initiated by the potential instant messaging sender.

29. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the user comprises a potential instant messaging sender, the first identity comprises a first potential instant messaging recipient, and the first persona is rendered to the first potential instant messaging recipient after communications are initiated by the potential instant messaging sender.

30. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for enabling perception of multiple online personas in an instant messaging communications session, the method comprising:

rendering, on an instant messaging recipient system, an instant messaging application user interface for an instant messaging communications session involving at least ~~[[one]]~~ two potential instant messaging recipients and a single potential instant messaging sender;

receiving a first message that includes a first text message and a first persona to be displayed by ~~[[the]]~~ a first potential instant messaging recipient when perceiving the first ~~text~~ message, the first persona being selected by ~~[[the]]~~ an instant messaging sender system from among multiple pre-defined personas for the single potential instant messaging sender, each persona comprising a collection of one or more self-expression items; ~~[[and]]~~

rendering the ~~selected~~ first persona at the ~~potential~~ instant messaging recipient system when rendering ~~another~~ a portion of the first message; ~~[[.]]~~

receiving a second message that includes a second text message and a second persona to be displayed by a second potential instant messaging recipient when perceiving the second message, the second persona being selected by the instant messaging sender system from among multiple pre-defined personas for the single potential instant messaging sender and being at least partially distinguishable from the first persona, each persona comprising a collection of one or more self-expression items; and

rendering the second persona at the instant messaging recipient system when rendering a portion of the second message.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 wherein the ~~selected persona is~~ first and second personas are rendered before communications are initiated by the potential instant messaging sender.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 wherein the ~~selected persona is~~
first and second personas are rendered after communications are initiated by the potential instant
messaging sender.

33. (Original) The method of claim 30 in which self-expression items comprise one
or more of a buddy icon, a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound.

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[34]]~~ 30 further comprising:
assigning ~~[[a]]~~ the first persona to ~~[[a]]~~ the first potential instant messaging recipient so
that the first persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected, in an instant messaging
communications session involving the first potential instant messaging recipient; and
assigning ~~[[a]]~~ the second persona to ~~[[a]]~~ the second potential instant messaging
recipient so that the second persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected, in an
instant messaging communications session involving the second potential instant messaging
recipient, ~~wherein the second persona is at least partially distinguishable from the first persona.~~

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[34]]~~ 30 further comprising:
assigning ~~[[a]]~~ the first persona to a first group of potential instant messaging recipients
so that the first persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected in an instant messaging
communications session involving a member of the first group of potential instant messaging
recipients; and

assigning [[a]] the second persona to a second potential instant messaging recipient so that the second persona is thereafter automatically invoked and projected, in an instant messaging communications session involving the second potential instant messaging recipient, ~~wherein the second persona is at least partially distinguishable from the first persona.~~

37. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein a persona is selected for use in an instant messaging communications session with a potential instant messaging recipient according to a hierarchy of selection.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 37 wherein selecting the persona according to a hierarchy of selection comprises:

first selecting a persona assigned to the potential instant messaging recipient if available;
next selecting a persona assigned to a group containing the potential instant messaging recipient, if available; and
next selecting a default persona, if available.

39. (Original) The method of claim 37 wherein selecting the persona according to a hierarchy of selection comprises appending one or more self-expression items of a higher-ranked persona to self-expression items of a lower-ranked persona.

40. (Original) The method of claim 37 wherein selecting the persona according to a hierarchy of selection comprises replacing one or more self-expression items of a lower-ranked persona with self-expression items of a higher-ranked persona.

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 further comprising locking a ~~personality~~ persona to a potential instant messaging recipient so as to guard against unintended ~~personality~~ persona switching.

42. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 further comprising forbidding a ~~personality~~ persona to be assigned to a potential instant messaging recipient so as to guard against unintended ~~personality~~ persona switching.

43. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 further comprising changing ~~[[the]] a personality~~ persona assigned a potential instant messaging recipient while conversing with the potential instant messaging recipient in an instant messaging communications session.

44. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 further comprising receiving a persona associated with ~~[[the]] a~~ potential instant messaging recipient and saving the received persona.

45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 wherein ~~[[the]] a~~ persona is provided by a third party.

46. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 wherein ~~[[the]] a~~ persona assigned to ~~[[the]] a~~ potential instant messaging recipient is configured to change upon the occurrence of a predetermined event.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises the passage of a pre-determined interval of time.

48. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises the passage of a pre-determined time of day.

49. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises a weather condition at a predetermined geographic location.

50. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the pre-determined event comprises a day of the week.

51. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined word.

52. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined emoticon.

53. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined date.

54. (Original) The method of claim 46 wherein the predetermined event comprises communication of a predetermined number of instant messages from the potential instant messaging recipient.

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30 wherein ~~[[the]]~~ a persona assigned to ~~[[the]]~~ a potential instant messaging recipient is configured to change at random among more than one selected personas.

56. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method for enabling perception of multiple personas in a communications session, the method comprising:

rendering, on a communications recipient system, a communications application user interface for a communications session involving at least ~~[[one]]~~ two potential communications recipients and a single potential communications sender;

receiving a first message that includes a first text message and a first persona to be displayed by ~~[[the]]~~ a first potential communications recipient when perceiving the first text message, the first persona being selected by ~~[[the]]~~ a communications sender system from among multiple pre-defined personas for the single potential communications sender, each persona comprising a collection of one or more self-expression items; ~~[[and]]~~

rendering the ~~selected~~ first persona at the ~~potential~~ communications recipient system when rendering ~~another~~ a portion of the first message; ~~[[.]]~~

receiving a second message that includes a second text message and a second persona to be displayed by a second potential communications recipient when perceiving the second message, the second persona being selected by the communications sender system from among multiple pre-defined personas for the single potential communications sender and being at least partially distinguishable from the first persona, each persona comprising a collection of one or more self-expression items; and

rendering the second persona at the communications recipient system when rendering a portion of the second message.

57. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the first persona comprises at least one of a buddy icon, a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound and the second persona comprises at least one of a buddy icon, a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound.

58. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein the first persona comprises at least one of a buddy icon, a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound and the second persona comprises at least one of a buddy icon, a wallpaper, an emoticon, and a sound.